

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition comprising at least two lactic acid bacterial strains, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said at least two lactic acid bacterial strains are able to colonize the gastrointestinal tract of humans and animals and in combination have at least two beneficial properties, which are an intestinal survival property, an intestinal binding property, an infection protecting property, and a fiber fermenting property, said at least two lactic acid bacterial strains being selected from the group comprising Lactobacillus plantarum F5 (LMG P-20604), Lactobacillus plantarum F26 (LMG P-20605), Lactobacillus plantarum 2592 (LMGP-20606), Pediococcus pentosaceus 16: 1 (LMG P-20608), and Leuconostoc mesenteroides 77: 1 (LMG P-20607), Lactobacillus plantarum 50: 1 (P-20609), and Lactobacillus paracasei (paracasei) F19 (LMG P-17806).
2. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic acid bacterial strains are viable bacteria of at least 10 CFU/g.
3. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal survival property is ability to grow in the presence of bile.
4. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal survival property is ability to survive at a low pH.
5. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said ability to survive at low pH is survival at low pH in the presence of pepsin.
6. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in ~~claim 1 and 4,~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal survival property is ability to produce stress proteins.

7. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said stress proteins cross- react with heat shock proteins.

8. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal binding property is ability to bind to mucin.

9. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal binding property is ability to bind to extracellular matrix proteins.

10. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal binding property is ability to bind to glucosaminoglycans.

11. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said intestinal binding property is ability to express cell surface hydrophobicity.

12. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said infection protecting property is ability to produce bacteriocins.

13. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said bacteriocins have activity against grampositive bacteria.

14. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said bacteriocins have activity against gramnegative bacteria.

15. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said bacteriocins have activity against yeast.

16. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said infection protecting property is ability to produce antioxidants.

17. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~

wherein said infection protecting property is ability to induce a pro-inflammatory cytokin response.

18. (Currently Amended) A probiotic composition as in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said fiber fermenting property is ability to ferment amylopectin and inulin.

19. (Original) Use of a lactic acid bacterial strain, selected from the group comprising Lactobacillus plantarum F5 (LMG P-20604), Lactobacillus plantarum F26 (LMG P-20605), Lactobacillus plantarum 2592 (LMG P-20606), Pediococcus penosaceus 16: 1 (LMGP-20608), and Leuconostocmesentorides 77: 1 (LMG P-20607), and Lactobacillus plantarum 50: 1 (P-20609), alone or in combination, as a probiotic additive in food or feed.